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The
Sunset Beacon

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More Hurdles To Overcome For Laguna Honda Hospital

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Although Laguna Honda Hospital has avoided a shutdown and been approved for recertification to continue st-state-funded Medicaid funding of patients, it still has another major hurdle to jump as renewal of federal-funded Medicare resources remains uncertain.

"We're not quite there yet," said District 7 Supervisor Myrna Melgar at a recent San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting. Melgar represents the area where the hospital is located.

"Because this is of such high importance for the City and because we are not yet at the point where we can take (patient) transfers in nor have resolved things with Medicare, I thought it would be really important for everybody to understand what's going on, be on the same page," Melgar said.

The 157-year-old hospital, located on a 62-acre campus, has not lost its license, yet the bulk of the patients there are covered by Medicare and Medicaid. Both programs terminated the hospital's participation after the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) decertified it in April 2022 because of deficiencies in safety protocols, improper hygiene practices by the staff and two nearly fatal overdoses from illegal drugs brought into the hospital last year by patients.

According to Interim CEO Roland Pickens, there are approximately 2,000 skilled nursing facilities throughout California. Although 15 of those are in San Francisco, none of their available beds were reserved for patients with Medicare or Medicaid cover-

Continued on page 8

First-Ever Sunset Night Market an Overwhelming Success

Irving Street between 20th and 23rd avenues was packed with people for more than five hours on Sept. 15 at the first-ever Sunset Night Market. The event was the brainchild of District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio who saw the crowds at the night market in Taipei, the home of his husband's family, and initiated a similar event in the Sunset. An estimated 10,000 people attended the inaugural gathering. Plans for future night markets in other Sunset neighborhoods are already underway. Mayor London Breed in her remarks said similar events should be held in other districts around the City. *Photo by Kevin Kelleher & Emily Trinh.*

New Plans Proposed for Stonestown Mall's Next Transformation

By Thomas K. Pendergast

The metamorphosis of the Stonestown Galleria from an archaic, 20th-century, car-centric shopping mall into a modern panoply of products, services and entertainment choices is progressing with a new arcade and bowling alley proposed for development there.

A Japanese company, Round One Entertainment Inc., has submitted plans to the City for a 50,063-square-foot entertainment venue in a space left after the exit of the Nordstrom department store in 2019.

The plans include a 12-lane bowling alley, a snack bar plus a kitchen. The San Francisco Chronicle reports that billiard and ping pong tables, arcade games and karaoke will also be featured.

It will be located near the Target store. Planning documents estimate the cost of construction at $4,505,670.

According to its website, the company opened its first location in 2010 at the Los Angeles suburb of City of Industry and now has more than 50 locations across the U.S. either opened or planned.

The website also gives a dress code: all guests must wear shirts and shoes; no "excessively baggy clothing" allowed nor any clothing with "profanity and/or objectionable artwork."

There is no description given for what is considered profane or objectionable and messages seeking comment from the company were not returned by press time.

Earlier this year security issues at the mall came to public attention after fights among Lowell High School students broke out, causing city officials to launch anti-violence initiatives in response, according to media reports.

Continued on page 9

Tunnel Records Opens New Retail Space in Richmond District

By Asha Ingram

Ben Wintroub of the Sunset District's Tunnel Records announced he will team up with Adam Bergeron in the Richmond District's 4 Star Theater. Starting Friday, Oct. 6, Tunnel Records' merchandise can be also purchased at the theater.

Originally opening its Taraval Street location in 2017, Tunnel Records has been known for selling funky and unique records, merchandise and more. According to its website, the store was opened with a single goal: "To be the perfect neighborhood record store. No pretentiousness, just good vibes …."

For Bergeron, the operator of the 4 Star, as well as the Balboa and Vogue theaters, a team up like this has long been a dream of his. The merger combines his love of movies and music.

"I always dreamed of there being a record store in the gallery space," he said. He is a regular at Tunnel Records, which he regards as the "best curated record store in San Francisco."

"It has the most friendly and knowledgeable staff," Bergeron said. "The vibe they put out there is second to none."

Ben Wintroub (left), owner of Tunnel Records, with 4 Star Theater co-owners Adam Bergeron (center) and his wife Jaimi Holker pose together in front of the 4 Star Theater on the corner of Clement Street and 23rd Avenue in the Outer Richmond. *Courtesy photo.*

So, when the opportunity to team up was presented to him, it seemed too good to pass up.

"When Ben Wintroub mentioned it as a possibility, it just seemed like such a perfect mix." Bergeron said. "I think they're pretty like-minded businesses. It's pretty easy to draw a thread between movie and record businesses." he explained.

Opening in 1921, the 4 Star closed in March 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, and shortly thereafter underwent massive renovations. The theater reopened in December 2022 showcasing many changes, such as switching from three theaters to one, expanding the single theater and renovating its lobby. The theater restored its original architecture, bringing back details like vestibule archways and red velvet draping.

Since its reopening, the theater has started to see a change in business.

"It has slowly and steadily gotten better and better," Bergeron said.

The 4 Star Theater's newly renovated space has also proven beneficial for the team-up with Tunnel Records. The 4 Star's second theater has been turned into a gallery space. Bergeron saw that this new space would be a perfect for this exact team-up.

"(The space) is almost just shaped like a record store would be," he explained. "It's really going to lend itself to having two parallel businesses there."

Opening weekend, Friday, Oct. 6, to Tuesday, Oct. 10, is set to have different themes

Continued on page 11

INSIDE

New Restaurant to Lease Old Cliff House Page 6
Announcements Page 7
Artist Jeremiah Daly Page 10
Flower Piano Expands Page 12
Photos by Roy Tahinten Page 15

Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Japanese Stone

How could the same man be the target of a U.S. declaration of war and be commemorated in Golden Gate Park?

Hirohito, born in 1901, married his wife Nagako in 1924 and ascended to the Japanese throne as Emperor in 1926.

Before Hirohito's visit to Washington D.C. and San Francisco, Congress passed the Japan-United States Friendship Act of 1975 to support trade and cultural exchanges between the two countries. President Gerald Ford signed the bill on Oct. 20, 1975, according to congress.gov.

The emperor and empress flew into San Francisco International Airport on a rainy Oct. 9, 1975, greeted by the Lowell High School band playing "California, Here I Come," as reported by the San Francisco Chronicle.

Between visits to Japantown and the Golden Gate Bridge, the emperor's motorcade stopped at the Botanical Garden (then known as the Strybing Arboretum) in Golden Gate Park for a small reception where the emperor gave a short speech to 200 Japanese Americans, according to the Chronicle.

The Japanese text inscribed in stone – installed later to commemorate the San Francisco visit – is written in columns read from right to left, following traditional East Asian writing conventions. The third of the stone on the right side mentions the emperor and empress. The center third of the stone commemorates the visit. The leftmost third lists Consul General Hidenori Sueoka representing Japan.

Lower on the stone is English text on a small separate plaque: "Erected by the Welcoming Committee of Japanese Americans in Northern and Central California."

Carved near the bottom edge of the stone is:

"Commemorating the visit of the emperor and empress of Japan, Oct. 10, 1975."

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission accepted the gift of the stone and plaque in a resolution, according to commission minutes of Jan. 8, 1976. The gift was valued at approximately $2,500 at the time (roughly $13,800 in 2023). The stone is about five-feet tall, four-feet, six-inches wide and 22-inches thick from front to back.

In 1941, after Japanese policymakers (including Hirohito, according to Herbert P. Bix's biography) decided to attack the U.S. navy base of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the U.S. entered World War II joining the Allies against the Axis Powers of Japan, Germany and Italy. In 1945, facing Soviet invaders from the north, U.S. invaders from the south and two atomic bombs dropped on Japan by the U.S., Hirohito announced on Aug. 15 that Japan would surrender. Japanese representatives signed the Instrument of Surrender on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945.

Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers Douglas McArthur oversaw the occupation of Japan and a new Japanese constitution in which Japan renounced war and the emperor was made a symbolic figurehead. Two treaties were signed in San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House on Sept. 8, 1951. A peace treaty between Japan and the WWII Allied forces placed the Ryukyu island chain (which includes Okinawa Island) in southwestern Japan under American administration and ended the occupation of the rest of Japan. A security treaty allowed the U.S. to maintain a military presence in Japan to deter other countries from attacking. A replacement security treaty passed in 1960 between the U.S. and Japan included an explicit American commitment to defend Japan. There was opposition. Some 30 million people – a third of the population of Japan – participated in protests against the treaty at their peak in June 1960, according to historian Nick Kapur. Press secretary to the U.S. president, James Hagerty, had his car mobbed by protesters on his visit to Tokyo on June 10, 1960. Hagerty had to be rescued by helicopter, according to a telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to the U.S. Department of State. During U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's visit to Okinawa nine days later, his car took the back roads to avoid crowds shouting anti-American slogans, the New York Times reported. Eisenhower's visit to Tokyo was cancelled.

The Ryukyu Islands were returned to Japanese administration by 1973, although the U.S. still maintains a military presence in Okinawa and other parts of Japan.

Hirohito died in 1989 at age 87 and Empress Nagako died in 2000 at age 97. The current emperor of Japan, Naruhito, is Hirohito's grandson. The current head of government is Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

The monument is in the Temperate Asia section of the San Francisco Botanical Garden. The Garden is free for San Francisco residents with proof of residency. The Garden opens daily at 7:30 a.m. It closes one hour after last entry, which is 5 p.m. in October until the first Sunday in November, through January, when last entry is 4 p.m.

The monument is close to the main entrance northwest of Ninth Avenue near Lincoln Way. After entering the garden, turn left onto the path around the Great Meadow past the monastery stones. Turn left again into the wide paved footpath for the Temperate Asia collection. After following the paved path for about 120 feet, on your right (northwest) side, notice stone stairs leading to the monument. If you pass ponds along the paved path, you've gone too far west.

Hidden in the "Temperate Asia" section of Golden Gate Park's Botanical Garden, a stone monument commemorates the visit of the emperor and empress of Japan on Oct. 10, 1975. Photo by *Michael Durand.*

Photos: Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival 2023

The Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival started in 2001 in Golden Gate Park and has grown to three full days of music on six stages drawing hundreds of thousands of fans. The festival is a gift to the City from the late philanthropist Warren Hellman and is free to attend.

Taylor Goldsmith. *Photo by Kevin Kelleher & Emily Trinh.*

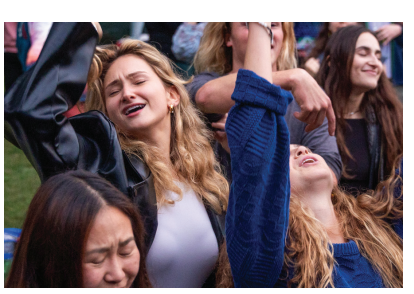
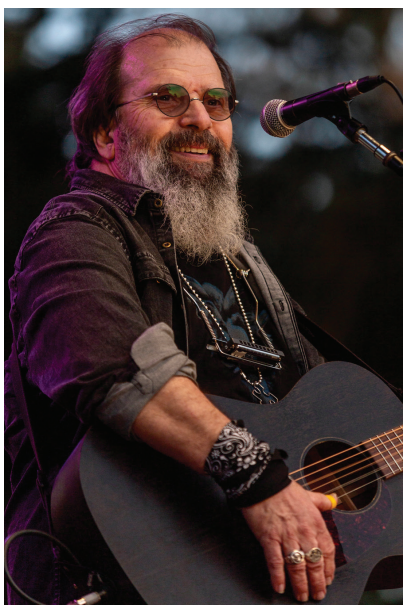


Photo by Kevin Kelleher & Emily Trinh.

Buddy Miller and Betty Lavette. *Photo by Laurie Rittman.*



Steve Earle. *Photo by Kevin Kelleher & Emily Trinh.*

Chuck Prophet. *Photo by Laurie Rittman.*

Photo by Kevin Kelleher & Emily Trinh.

The Sunset Beacon

October 2023 – Volume 33, No. 4

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Award-Winning Filmmaking Partners Tell Stories That Need to Be Told

By Noma Faingold

Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, co-directing, co-producing and co-writing partners since 1978, are promoting their latest documentary, "Música!" during the fall film festival circuit. Despite winning Oscars, Emmys and a Grammy, creating and releasing new work never gets old.

"The enthusiasm to make films was there since age 19 when I started out," said longtime San Francisco resident Epstein, 68. "It has never abated. With each film, it's like entering a new world. But it's also really hard."

Epstein moved by bus from New York City to San Francisco at age 19. His first job in the City was as an usher at the Castro Theatre back when there was still a smoking section. While taking a filmmaking class at San Francisco State University, he became a production assistant on a documentary in early development where he met his mentor, Peter Adair. He quickly rose to co-director, with the other members of the Mariposa Film Group. The film became the landmark documentary "Word Is Out," released in theaters in 1978, airing nationally on prime-time public television, and recently restored and re-released by Milestone.

His most recent work, "Música!" follows four devoted Cuban musical prodigies who play in a jazz ensemble at the prestigious high school conservatory Amadeo Roldán. They get the opportunity to play with seasoned jazz musicians in New Orleans, which looks and feels like a sister city to Havana in the documentary. Just jamming with the New Orleans players is revelatory for the Cuban youths. Then they have a residence at the legendary Preservation Hall.

"The film was a labor of love," said Epstein. "We had no funding."

"Música!" which will have two screenings at the Mill Valley Film Festival, Oct. 5-15, is the culmination of an eight-year journey that started with Epstein tagging along on a trip with his sister and brother-in-law, members of Horns for Havana, a non-profit organization which repairs and brings instruments to aspiring musicians in Havana.

"When I heard the jazz band and saw their joy, I didn't want to leave the room," Epstein said. "I started filming right then and there."

Epstein, born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, arrived in San Francisco during what he refers to as "the gay migration" of the 1970s. He has lived in the Castro-Duboce Triangle neighborhood for several decades. He is co-chair of the film program at the California College of Arts.

Aside from trust, mutual respect, shared sensibility and a like-minded sense of humor, the Epstein/Friedman partnership continues to work because of their commitment to each project.

"We want to tell stories that haven't been told and need to be," he said. "Come hell or high water."

Epstein was willing to comment on several of the celebrated films he and his partner have created.

"Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music" (2023)

Epstein/Friedman documented a one-time-only 24-hour performance in New York by maximalist musical performer Taylor Mac, which covers 240 years of American music and history (streaming on Max). There are exuberant, intimate and sobering moments. The audience committed to the 24 hours, too. The most elaborate, glittery costumes enhance the spectacle.

"There's a reason why Taylor won a MacArthur Genius Award," Epstein said. "It's because he's a genius. He's such a humanist, provocateur and clown. His foundation comes from a love of humanity. His work has so much to say about the world we live in and our history. Doing it was joyful, but hard. We had to take 24 hours of material and whittle it down into a feature-length film. The mechanics were challenging. We also felt it needed a backstory, which we added."

"Linda Ronstadt: The Sound of My Voice" (2019)

Winning a Grammy Award for the moving documentary (streaming on Max), the directing/producing team is now three quarters to EGOT status. The film follows Ronstadt's lengthy, eclectic career chronologically, from her rise as one of the only female rock stars in the male-dominated 1970s music scene to the present day, living a quiet life in San Francisco's Sea Cliff neighborhood, unable to sing, having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2013.

The film shows the purity of Ronstadt's voice in every musical genre she insisted on exploring: country rock (1970s), straight-ahead rock ("Simple Dreams," "Living in the USA"), light opera (performing "The Pirates of Penzance" on Broadway), new wave ("Mad Love"), traditional pop standards with the Nelson Riddle Orchestra (three albums), traditional country harmony-rich collaborations with Dolly Parton and Emmylou Harris ("Trio" and "Trio II"), traditional Mexican Mariachi ("Canciones de Mi Padre," "Mas Canciones"), pop/r&b featuring Grammy-winning duets with Aaron Neville ("Cry Like a Rainstorm").

"I'm so pleased her music continues to get the attention it deserves," Epstein said. 'The Leftovers' used a song ('Long, Long Time'), which brought more interest to our film. She's very smart, incredibly well read and informed. I was taken by her humility.

"At first, she didn't have any interest in a film being made. We pursued her for a year and finally she relented. I think she's glad she did. There's not an ounce of self-pity in her. She continues to enjoy her life and she has an ever-curious mind."

"Lovelace" (2013)

For the largely overlooked biopic – Epstein said that he doesn't like that term – the source material was the 1980 Linda Lovelace (born Linda Susan Boreman) autobiography, "Ordeal." The film depicts how the young woman was groomed by her sleazy, abusive husband, Chuck Traynor (Peter Sarsgaard giving his all in portraying the desperate and exploitive character) into becoming a famous porn star, starring in 1972's enormously successful "Deep Throat," which took in $600 million at the box office.

We see Lovelace (played like a girl next door by Amanda Seyfried) almost

Filmmaking partners Jeffrey Friedman and Rob Epstein. *Courtesy photo.*

A scene from "Música!" *Courtesy photo.*

destroyed by not just Traynor, but by men in the industry, from Hugh Hefner (James Franco) to porn producer Anthony Romano (Chris Noth). The film is another cautionary tale about the porn industry, along the same lines as Bob Fosse's "Star 80."

"We were directors for hire. It was not our script," Epstein explained. "I should watch it again to see if my perceptions of it have changed. What interested us in making the film was the notion of the psychology of Linda Lovelace when she was making 'Deep Throat,' once she stepped out of that character and how she changed (becoming an anti-porn activist). We wanted to get at that dichotomy. Why she felt she had to live one way and live another way after the fact. I wish the film had made more of an impression. The performances are stellar. The cast was great – Amanda, Peter, Sharon Stone, Chris and Bobby Cannavale."

"HOWL" (2010)

The filmmaking partners' first foray into narrative work, "HOWL," set in San Francisco, centers around Beat poet Allen Ginsberg's opus, "Howl," for which he was put on trial (for obscenity) in 1957. The film's style has an appropriate counterculture style, combining animation, black-and-white cinematography and touches of documentary techniques. (Streaming on Peacock.)

"'Howl' was intentionally more experimental," Epstein said. "It defies category. Every word in the film is artifact but spoken by actors. To make all those elements fit together into one film was the big challenge. We tried to make it cohesive. It was the cinematic expression of what Ginsberg was doing with the poem. Living in San Francisco, I was drawn to the Beat poets and what the era symbolized. I was curious to deconstruct the myth and message of 'Howl' and Ginsberg's personal history imbedded within it."

"Celluloid Closet" (1995)

The film is a fast-moving, entertaining look at how mainstream movies portrayed homosexuals from the early days of cinema through more nuanced characters in 1993's "Philadelphia." The Emmy and Peabody Award-winning doc (streaming on Tubi and Amazon Prime), based on the 1981 book by Vito Russo, Epstein/Friedman make the material come alive, showing the absurdity and demonization of gay and lesbian characters in film. There's also an amusing segment covering Rock Hudson/Doris Day romantic comedies. The closeted Hudson was in on the irony in films like "Pillow Talk," where his character pretends to be gay to win over the Doris Day character.

"We're proud of the new restoration the film just got from Sony Classics," Epstein said. "We were trying to change how gays were depicted in film. Our agenda was not activist, but the result was. It was a historical analysis about stereotype structures."

"Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt" (1989)

The first Epstein and Friedman collaboration won an Academy Award for best documentary. It sensitively tells the story of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, profiling several people who are represented by panels in the quilt. It sparks empathy in dealing with loss, grief, family connections and the magnitude of AIDS in the early years of the epidemic. The first display of the complete quilt on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in 1987 elicits awe. (Streaming on Amazon Prime.)

"We were looking at the devastation of AIDS, losing partners, family members and the community that was being built because of all that loss," Epstein recalled. "The quilt became emblematic of this enormous devastation. Literally the fabric. What you look for as a filmmaker is creating something that can reverberate and resonate."

"The Times of Harvey Milk" (1984)

Before the Epstein-Friedman partnership, Epstein directed, co-produced and co-wrote "The Times of Harvey Milk" (streaming on Max) and won an Academy Award for best documentary. Narrated by writer/actor Harvey Fierstein, the influential film about the rise and assassination of the first openly gay man elected to public office in California (as member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors) has relevance today in an ominous way, with the anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation and rise in hate in parts of the U.S.

"The politics of it all seems regressive now," Epstein said. "But socially we've made great gains. The cycle of these things get re-politicized. I wanted to make this film because I lived the story. I was already living in San Francisco. Before Harvey was murdered, I was working on a film about the emerging gay rights movement. I had started making a film about gays coming out and self-identifying and the backlash to that. Then, the assassination became the whole embodiment of what I set out to do. The film is less biography than the telling of when he became such an important political figure and why, while providing context.

"I was completely surprised to win the Academy Award. There was momentum, but it was all new to me. I had no idea what to expect but had to be prepared because it would be a historic moment. It gave me a certain level of acknowledgement and the feeling that I should keep going."

"Música!" screens at the Mill Valley Film Festival, Oct. 9, 5 p.m., Sequoia 2 and Oct. 10, 6:30 p.m., Roxie Theater, San Francisco. Co-directors/co-producers Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman are expected guests. Information and tickets: mvff.com.

Real Estate

John M. Lee

Choosing the Right Agent

There is no question that our real estate market has changed this year. With fewer sales and a tougher market to navigate, how do you choose the agent that is right for you?

With more than 5,000 real estate agents selling properties in San Francisco, how do you go about choosing an agent to service your real estate needs? When choosing one, do you choose a friend, relative, neighbor or co-worker? Should you work with an agent at a large firm, a small firm, a franchise or an independent?

While there are exceptions to every rule, and every marketplace is different, here are some solid rules to apply when you want the best representation to protect your interests. Just remember, in the end, it's your money that is at stake!

The real estate profession is plagued by high turnovers. Statistics show that 50% of Realtors do not make it past their first year in business, and then another 50% of those who remain do not make it past their second year. This creates a workforce that is made up of many newcomers. While there are brand-new agents with good intentions, why trust one of the largest investments you will ever make or sell to someone without experience?

Always look for an agent with at least a few years of experience. Anyone still in the business for a few years has probably at least learned the fundamentals of real estate; they made the cut and have transitioned into being an experienced agent. Especially in today's changing real estate market, a skilled negotiator and their awareness of the marketplace can assure that you can obtain the best possible price if you are the seller and that you are not overpaying for a property if you are a buyer.

Another problem we have in the industry is a large number of part-time salespeople. They have either retired from some other career, work in real estate seasonally (such as teachers working the summer in real estate) or are earning a second income for the family by working in real estate evenings and weekends.

No matter how long they have been in the business, their lack of a full-time commitment makes it impossible for them to keep up with the vast changes in the law, market conditions and current business practices that are occurring in the profession today. If an agent is not working full time, look for someone else.

Obtaining a real estate license is extremely easy. All someone has to do is to take a few classes and pass a multiple-choice exam and he or she can sell real estate. You cannot rely on licensing to indicate competence. Unfortunately, many agents' real estate education ends with their pre-licensing education. Look for someone who is educated in real estate and constantly attends seminars to learn the most current trends and selling techniques.

Before you hire an agent to help you buy or sell a home, you should interview at least three agents in person. In order to do this, first get recommendations from friends, family and neighbors. Then do some research on the internet to see what kind of marketing the various agents and companies are doing in your area and call the few that impress you. Then make brief fact-finding calls to determine which of the agents on your list are full time and experienced.

The interview itself need not be a formal one. It is just a time for you to meet the agents, to explain your real estate needs, and to determine whether you would be comfortable working with him or her. Ask whatever questions you like, or simply explain your goals and listen carefully to what they propose to do to help you in attaining your them. Ask if they have been through a down real estate cycle like the one we are experiencing, and what they are doing differently to assist their clients during this time.

If you follow the suggestions above, you will find that there are excellent agents working for firms both large and small; both franchised and independent. Thus, the real decision must be made based on the competency of the individual agent you will be working with on a day-to-day basis, especially in this rapidly changing market.

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Sunset Homes Sold in September*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
2190 29th Ave.	2	1	1,162	$1,151,000
4426 Irving St.	3	1	1,300	1,200,000
2270 22nd Ave.	3	1	1,530	1,248,000
2422 34th Ave.	3	1	1,250	1,300,000
3100 Rivera St.	4	3	1,824	1,350,000
2226 39th Ave.	3	1	1,300	1,450,000
1042 Pacheco St.	2	1	1,075	1,464,000
2011 45th Ave.	3	2	1,575	1,500,000
3226 Ulloa St.	3	2	1,850	1,600,000
1710 25th Ave.	4	3	1,911	1,650,000
1831 16th Ave.	3	2	1,325	1,707,000
2158 40th Ave.	3	2	1,690	1,751,000
2368 16th Ave.	4	3	1,944	1,780,000
1598 36th Ave.	4	4	3,530	3,150,000

**Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.*

Our community has the right to health care
We can help you enroll in Medi-Cal
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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Restoring Electoral Sanity

Chief Justice Earl Warren of the United States Supreme Court in the 1950s and '60s (who swore me in as a lawyer entitled to practice law in the U.S. Supreme Court, which I never did!), when governor of California, began a political address thusly: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to see the dense crowd here tonight." A voice from the back shouted: "Don't be too pleased. We ain't all dense!"

Thanks to Sunset District resident Robert Guichard, San Francisco voters who aren't dense will have the opportunity to restore electoral sanity to our beleaguered (if not beloved) Board of Supervisors next year. After the California Supreme Court's August decision in a case in which the Pico Boulevard Neighborhood Association challenged under the California Civil Rights Act of 2012 the City of Santa Monica's election of City Council members by at-large (all city voters) selections, and remanded the case to the Court of Appeal for further action. Guichard, advised by election laws specialty lawyers, produced a proposed Charter amendment to abolish district election of our 11 City Hall "beauties." At press time, the city attorney was reviewing the proposal with 49,000 registered voters' approval needed for the March 4, 2024 election. I anticipate endorsement of it by the San Francisco Taxpayers Association, of which I am president.

Guichard, not a politician, may be remembered by "old-timers" as the chief architect of the 1980 initiative restoring at-large supervisorial elections to San Franciscans and later an initiative which mandated the top supervisorial vote-getter as president of the Board of Supervisors. All this occurred after voters were hoodwinked by radical proponents of a "ward" system into abolishing at-large selection of supervisors and substituted election by 11 different districts. That prevailed until 1997 when then-Supervisor Barbara Kaufman persuaded the Board to revert to the district (i.e., ward) system.

Instead of requiring at least 100,000 votes for success, we San Francisco voters now also have "ranked-choice" voting which means someone can be elected to our governing legislative body with a paltry 8,237 votes, as Supervisor Matt Dorsey amassed last year to join these elite second floor of City Hall "mavens."

The only difference in complete restoration of our historic system arises from that 2012 state law regarding civil rights which requires candidates to represent 11 different districts after being elected by voters throughout our city. Existing California law requires such system which Oakland used years ago regarding its City Council. Telephone Mr. Guichard at 415-661-7000 or me at 415-681-5555 if you would like to aid signature-gathering of registered voters or donate money to the campaign costs and stay tuned!

I neglected to inform readers last year of an ominous effort by President Joseph Biden to establish a new federal agency called the Disinformation Board which would've been part of the Department of Homeland Security. A coterie of opponents, Republicans, libertarians and even liberals, condemned the plan, comparing it to the "Ministry of Truth" from George Orwell's novel "1984." The White House had quietly announced the board's creation in April 2022 to fight the spread of "disinformation" from agents of Russia, China and Iran. It can happen here.

Meanwhile, California's gasoline tax soared in July 2023 to 57.9 cents per gallon, up from 53.9 cents per gallon, the highest in the nation. Remember when gasoline service stations posted signs telling customers the amount of gasoline taxes included in the price per gallon? No longer do customers with those evil non-electric motor vehicles receive such relevant information. And the smooth roadways which state gasoline taxes finance seem non-existent in much of San Francisco. One lovely exception exists on Junipero Serra Boulevard between Sloat Boulevard and Brotherhood Way; an antidote to the long beleaguered Taraval Street from 19th Avenue to Sunset Boulevard.

Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States said it best: "That government is best which governs least." That'll nourish many of us until Halloween and, maybe, Thanksgiving. A nurse registering a new patient asked: "When is your birthday?" "Aug. 22," replied the patient. The nurse asked: "What year?" "Every year," answers the patient. Tra-boom!

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, SF Ethics Commission member, president of the California High Speed Rail Authority governing board and retired Superior Court judge.

New Restaurant to Lease Old Cliff House Space; Name To Be Determined

By Thomas K. Pendergast

The building that was once home to the Cliff House restaurant has been leased to a development group which plans on opening several dining options in 2024. The metal frame atop the building once held the Cliff House sign. If the new operators want to bring back the historic title, they will need to negotiate with the previous operators who own the name's trademark. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

Almost three years after the Cliff House restaurant at Lands End became another business casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Park Service (NPS) announced a new lease has been signed by Sutro Lands End Partners LLC to operate a restaurant in that building.

The new name for it has not been made public. It might not keep the name "Cliff House" because the Hountalas family that ran the restaurant has trademarked the name and wants payment in order to allow the building to continue to be called the Cliff House.

The NPS says the property will include several dining options, including a new café in an area formerly used as a rental, while the old café known as the Lands End Lookout will also come back operated by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

The opening date has not been set, although it is expected to be sometime next year. Sutro Lands End Partners, LLC, will be renovating the space in the meantime.

"We are excited to maintain this public space and invite a new operator to provide a dining experience that is loved by our community," said David Smith, general superintendent for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. "We are absolutely grateful to our community for their support and patience during the extended vacancy and look forward to working with this new partner on public offerings at this iconic site."

The lease will be in place for up to 20 years.

"Since 1863, there has been a Cliff House perched on that dramatic bluff welcoming locals and visitors to come and be inspired by the views of the Pacific and perhaps share a drink or a meal with friends and family," said Adam Leff, a San Francisco attorney who has been involved in rejuvenating other California landmarks into popular destinations like the Malibu Pier. "We are honored to have been chosen by the National Park Service to be the stewards of this beloved venue for the next generation."

Leff is a San Francisco native who grew up in the Richmond District.

"San Francisco has been good to me and to my family ever since my grandparents arrived here during World War II," Leff stated in a press release. "I am well aware that it is a tough time to undertake a major hospitality project in San Francisco. It is an honor to be given the opportunity to restore this beloved landmark and doing so is my way of expressing my gratitude and lending a helping to our beautiful City at a moment when it can use help from all of us who live here."

The BCV Architecture + Interiors firm will be leading the repair and renovation of the building.

"BVC Architecture + Interiors is excited to be working with Sutro Lands End Partners to re-envision the iconic Cliff House," Hans Baldauf of BVC said. "BCV has been fortunate to work on bringing new life to other notable San Francisco buildings, including the Ferry Building and what is now the X (Twitter) building. Our goal will be to institute building improvements and décor that will create a warm welcome for arriving visitors, connecting them to the rich history of the building and its site, and encourage engagement with the natural environment through activation of the building's outdoor decks, terraces and street frontages.

"We see and opportunity to make the building dynamic by providing multiple food and retail offerings."

The Hi Neighbor Hospitality Group will be brought in as consultants for the project.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with Sutro Lands End partners," said co-founder Ryan Cole. "We look forward to bringing local hospitality businesses to this historic site that will offer a variety of food options at different price points. Each will demonstrate the depth and diversity of food and beverage talent in the Bay Area as well as showcase products from local and sustainable farmers, fisherman and food purveyors."

Earlier this year, District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan authored legislation to waive the major encroachment fee assessed on the Seal Rock Inn restaurant located at 545 Point Lobos Ave. near Lands End. Chan says this ordinance clears bureaucratic barriers for restaurants looking to open in the space and will help bring this legacy business back to life.

"I am pleased to welcome the new operator for the space, Sutro Lands End, reinvigorating our Outer Richmond neighborhood," Chan said. "The area is an iconic gathering point for generations of San Franciscans, offering the most beautiful views and creating a space for our communities and visitors. Now I look forward to an open dialogue exploring how we will continue the legacy of this space.

"It's hard to compare and compete against generations of San Franciscans' memories of that space," she said. "No matter what you do, it's hard to compete with that. So, it's a high expectation of what's to come. We want to make sure that they have something for the community and so, hopefully, make that transition just a little bit easier for everybody."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CARRIAGE HOUSE SALE

Sale to benefit the Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Anne's Home, 300 Lake St. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 20 and 21, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Vintage, couture and ready-to-wear clothing, art, jewelry, collectables, men's and women's shoes and accessories, kitchen and household items, lamps and more. All proceeds support St. Anne's home.

CELEBRATE CO-OP MONTH WITH LOCAL AUTHOR

Celebrate October as co-op month with local author Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff and Other Avenues Food Co-op, 3930 Judah St. (near 44th Avenue) on Saturday, Oct. 7, 2-3 p.m. Shanta will discuss how Other Avenues was born from the Bay Area's food cooperative movement. Discussion will be followed by a pickling demonstration and tasting of pickles, home-made chai and crackers. To register, call 415-661-7475. (You can find an archive of Shanta's "Cooking Together" columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.)

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT

The Children's Book Project is a San Francisco-based nonprofit that provides free books for children and youth living in economically vulnerable communities to help improve literacy and close the achievement gap. You can help create equitable access to books by donating new or gently used books that your children have outgrown. If you have good condition books to donate, our Book Bank is open by appointment at 2166 Palou St., or find a local book drop at childrensbookproject.org.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stance on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of viewpoints. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

Sunset Mercantile, in collaboration with Fonzie's Artisanal Goods, presents the third annual Dia de los Muertos in the Sunset. We welcome everyone to our celebration of life, so we can reconnect with our loved ones through Mexican traditions as a community. Join us for a night filled with food, music, dance, and compassion as we mourn our loved ones through the joys of life. Wednesday, Nov. 1, 6-9 p.m. on 37th Avenue at Ortega Street. Learn more at sunsetmercantilesf.com

DRAMA WITH FRIENDS

Drama With Friends is a free ZOOM THEATRE. Want to act? Join a troupe of older actors looking to expand our acting pool. We present short plays by local playwrights every third Monday night of the month followed by a Q&A with the playwright. Prospective actors need to set aside time for two or three one-hour rehearsals a month. Want to join the audience? You're welcome too. Check out the Community Living Campaign for further information (sfcommunityliving.org/event/dwf) or write judygoddess@gmail.com.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

Ortega Branch Library Tech Support Popup: Felton's Tech Squad is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities. Ask questions regarding how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop. One-on-one session in English. Friday, Oct. 27, 1:30-3 p.m. at the Ortega Branch Library, 3223 Ortega St. Drop-in for a one-on-one session in English. For more information, call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

FREE ADAPTIVE BIKE PROGRAM

Serving people with disabilities in SF parks, the free Adaptive Bike Program is presented by a partnership between SF Rec. and Park, Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP) and SF Municipal Transportation Agency. Ride an adaptive bike in two lovely locations either in Golden Gate Park (every first and third Saturday) or on The Great Highway (every second and fourth Saturday). Reservations are required (limited availability on some bikes). To reserve a bike, contact BORP Cycling Center at 510-848-2930 or e-mail at cycling@borp.org by 5 p.m. on the Thursday before the event.

GREAT HAUNTWAY

The third annual Great Hauntway takes place Sunday, Oct. 29, 1-4 p.m. In a San Francisco twist on Halloween trick or treating, neighbors from all over SF gather on the Upper Great Highway from Judah to Taraval streets to create a community-powered trick or treat promenade. Neighbors are invited to rent a table or create their own zany trick or treat station, and enjoy a non-stop parade of cute kids, amazingly costumed adults and live music. Children enjoy more than a mile of safe, car-free Halloween fun that includes non-candy treats, bounce houses, arts and crafts, and a free professional photo booth. To learn more and reserve your spot on the Hauntway, visit greathauntway.com.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy October birthday to Celeste Aquino, David Barker, Zarek Bastani, Estella Bond, Diane Callman, Hannah Chon, Megan Cresci, Carlos Joey Dardon, J9 Downing, MJSD, David Gillies, Kathy Hom, Tam Huynh, Laura Johnson-Bickford, Matt Kauffman, Sidney Keith, Dylan King, Maya Klein, Sue Kozakiewicz, Becky Lee, Brittney Lee, Matthew Leigh, Helen Liu, Kris Lue, Lynda Nguyen, Michelle Nicoletti, Kyle O'Rourke, Melissa Judith Poon, Sue Roberts, Charlotte Schmidlapp, Michelle Schulz, Andy Sponring, Lucia Maria Sullivan, Jeffrey Trotter, Chelsea Tsang, Kari Vides, Gale Ward, Athena Weber, Maxwell Zachary White, Madison Wong, Ruby Yep, Simone Yuen and Barbara Zartun. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Father Sauer Academy Parents Club is hosting its second annual Harvest Festival on Sunday, Oct. 29, 2023, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Saint Ignatius, Gordan Practice at 2155 37th Ave. between Quintara and Rivera streets. Tickets are $10 at the door for all day carnival games, bounce houses and more. Ticket sales support students' scholarships at Father Sauer Academy.

OUTER SUNSET FARMERS MARKET AND MERCANTILE

Join us every Sunday at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile, where you can find fresh produce from local farmers and ranchers, enjoy delicious dishes from Outer Sunset eateries and discover unique finds from local makers and artisans. Every Sunday, find a revolving series of live performers, engaging activities and exhibitions at the ArtShip and fun zone! Our farmers market accepts WIC, EBT and Market Match! 37th Avenue at Ortega Street, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Go to sunsetmercantilesf.com or call 415-465-2475 for more details.

"PHOTOS OF THE MONTH" ONLINE GALLERY

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages more than 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs by the 15th of the month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

PIANO LESSONS

I taught myself how to play the piano when I was a teenager and have been playing for more than 50 years. I came up with a simple method of learning chords and love sharing the knowledge. If you want to learn, I can help you. Call 415-706-6428 for details.

REFUSE REFUSE CLEANUPS

Cleanups in the Sunset District:

Sunday, Oct. 8, 1–3 p.m., Great Highway Park Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/448138/.

Wednesday, Oct. 11, 5-6 p.m., Sunset Happy Hour Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/581814/.

Sunday, Oct. 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Sunset Mercantile Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/557047/.

Saturday, Oct. 21, 10 a.m.–noon, Central Sunset Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/546732/.

Saturday, Oct. 28, 10 a.m.–noon, Inner Sunset Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/464169/.

REINSTATE 58

If you plan on leaving your home to your children, you may want to sign the petition at forcalifornians.com. Proposition 58, passed in 1986 – with 75% of California voter approval – allowed for the transfer of property from parent to child WITHOUT triggering reassessment of property taxes. It has been extremely important for families to climb the economic ladder and build some intergenerational financial stability. This was lost in 2021. Reinstate 58. – Volunteers forcalifornians.com.

SECONDHAND SATURDAYS

Come check out Secondhand Saturdays and celebrate all things vintage, antique and secondhand. Presented by Sunset Mercantile every third Saturday of the month at Ortega Street and 37th Avenue, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Shop local from more than 50 vintage vendors, makers and artisans that are some of the Bay Area's best. Enjoy live music, family friendly activities, food trucks, rotating monthly features and more! Visit sunsetmercantilesf.com/secondhand/ for more information.

SENIOR NEEDS A HOME

Senior lady, quiet, with references, needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco. Having arthiritis, she avoids flights of steps and hills. Uses public transportation. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide her a home.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

SUNSET COMPOSER DEBUTS NEW BALLET

Sunset resident and composer JJ Hollingsworth will have her new short ballet, "Glass Suite" premiere at a concert dedicated to world peace. Russian-born concert pianist, Nikolay Khozyainov, will perform a peace recital called "The Night of Premieres" at Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave., on Saturday, Oct. 14, at 7 p.m. Maestro Khozyainov recently received the Gold Medal of Peace in a ceremony from the United Nations Blue Helmets. The United Nations Charter was signed in 1945 in Herbst Theater. Also on the program is the premier of Sunset resident JJ Hollingsworth's composition, "Glass Suite," a 12-minute contemporary ballet about the "depression glass" dishes that graced American tables during the 1930s and '40s. Hollingsworth is the composer-in-residence at Forte House Productions: For tickets, go to cityboxoffice.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=2929. For more information, call 415-627-8436 or email fortehouse1498@gmail.com.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to the Sunset Beacon readers who generously donated to the Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper campaign. Your contribution helped keep us financially healthy. If you donated before we started our Patreon campaign and would like some of our Sunset Beacon branded products (tote bag, pens, coffee mug, hat or shirt), please send an email to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. We would also like to share just your name in the paper to thank you. Please let us know if that is OK. To donate, please visit our website to sign up for our Patreon campaign, send a check to: Sunset Beacon, P.O. Box 16035, SF, CA, 94116 or send via PayPal to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Thank you!

WRITING AND EDITING SERVICE

I am a California licensed attorney who is able to help with many of your writing, editing, and proofreading needs. I can assist with reports, proposals, professional applications, books, resumes and cover letters. I have 25 years of government experience and a 12-year human resources and recruiting background. Recently, I edited a manuscript for one author and provide ongoing editorial support to another. I welcome large and small projects. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns or feedback. Email: writerseditors17@gmail.com or call/text 415-407-7328. I look forward to working with you.

Announcements: $1 per word, 20-word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. FREE: There is no charge for occasional announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,000 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (more than 20,000 views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

State Grants Target Retail Theft

Many of us have seen the viral images of retail theft across news outlets and social media. Large groups of thieves enter a retailer and steal thousands of dollars of merchandise in a matter of minutes.

Luxury stores in Union Square have been among the high-profile targets across the state, but small businesses haven't been immune. The crime can be devastating to the business, traumatic for workers and unsafe for shoppers. The loss often leads to higher prices for consumers.

To help crack down on these brazen smash-and-grab crimes, I championed with Gov. Gavin Newsom a way for the state to step in with funding, making it California's largest single investment to combat organized retail crime. Nearly $270 million in grants have been awarded to 55 law enforcement agencies to increase arrests and prosecutions of these cases.

I'm happy to report my district, Assembly District 19, will receive some of this state funding:

- San Francisco Police: $15 million.
- San Mateo County Sheriff: $15 million.
- Daly City Police: $8 million.

These grants can be used to staff retail theft investigative units, install advanced surveillance technology, train loss prevention officers, create new task forces, foster increased cooperation with businesses and the community and conduct blitz operations.

In San Francisco, the funding will help the police department address persistent staffing shortages. They will be able to hire more personnel, allow overtime for patrol officers, and purchase vehicles and equipment.

Included in the $270 million grant program is funding to 13 district attorneys' (D.A.) offices with each receiving $2 million for vertical prosecution. That means the D.A. will be hiring or assigning staff dedicated to major retail theft cases, rather than assigning these cases to multiple attorneys as they pass through the system. San Francisco is one of the recipients, and the office has indicated they will use the money for a fully dedicated prosecutor and investigator, both assigned to the City's repeat and group offenders of retail theft.

Instead of the cases being distributed in the D.A.'s general felonies group, a vertical system allows the new staff to familiarize themselves with store managers and workers, while developing the ability to identify witnesses. These relationships could be key to successful convictions. The D.A.'s Office also says these extra resources will help them build strong cases against fencers and resellers who make these crimes lucrative.

The $270 million is distributed over three years with the first installment going out in October 2023. This state support from arrest to conviction is critical to the efforts in stopping organized retail theft, and it helps ensure law enforcement has the resources they need to stop it. I know there are other criminal activities that need similar attention, and the Legislature is looking at more ways to enhance state/local partnerships to help make our neighborhoods safer.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Laguna Honda

Continued from page 1

age. So, finding new beds for hundreds of patients was a daunting task.

In October of 2022 Laguna Honda Hospital got a break when San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu's fight with federal and state authorities produced a settlement that temporarily halted the eviction of more than 600 patients on Medicare or Medicaid.

Initially, the hospital was supposed to have moved out these patients the previous month by transferring them to other healthcare facilities, but in July 2022, federal and state regulators paused all patient transfers and discharges from the hospital after 11 patients died following their removal from the facility.

At the Sept. 26 meeting of the SF Board of Supervisors, Pickens told the Board that the hospital administration and staff are working toward recertification in the Medicare program.

"We are now preparing for a thorough and rigorous facility-wide full CMS Medicare certification that can come at any time," he said. "We applied for Medicare recertification because of the tremendous progress we've made over the last 18 months and are confident that we're ready to show, again, that we can and do consistently meet the highest standards for patient care, safety and daily operations.

"Because Laguna has been recertified in the Medicaid provider program, we are so fortunate and are appreciative of the fact that those involuntary discharges that were scheduled to take effect on Sept. 19 will no longer move forward," he explained. "This was a great relief to our entire Laguna Honda community and again, thanks to all of you and many others who helped make this achievement possible."

Pickens said the hospital will not begin admitting new patients until after they determine that the improvements they have made over the last few months are sustained for the long term.

"It's crucial that we wait until this upcoming, full Medicare survey is complete to see what their findings are and then what improvements we will need to make based upon those findings in the form of a plan of correction," he said. That is the standard process whenever there's a survey. There are inherently findings and so it's prudent upon us to get those finding and then make whatever modifications that need to be made."

Pickens also introduced his replacement as the hospital's new CEO, Sandra Simon.

"I've spent my whole career in skilled nursing," Simon told the Board. "When I was in college I was working, like many of us, in fast food and my roommate said, 'Hey, we're hiring nursing assistants.' The industry, as you know, has always been short (of) nursing (staff), even back then.

"And so, starting as a nursing assistant, I decided to change my degree to a bachelor's in gerontology. It was a new program back then. And I pursued an MBA (Master's in Business Administration) in health care and really worked my way through various levels of skilled nursing organization activities and social services."

She said she always admired Laguna Honda and wanted to work there.

"I'm just thrilled to be able to come and join this team and help the City and help this icon be the new Laguna Honda Hospital," she said.

Dr. Theresa Palmer, who once worked at the hospital and has long been a critic of the way the hospital was run before it lost CMS certification, addressed the Board.

"There's a very good reason that the federal government decertified it," Palmer said. "It was badly managed, and we've got to prevent this from happening again.

"And I really think that the Board of Supervisors should have a meeting of the whole about this every three months until it's fully back in operation and readmitting. Nursing home residents that have had to find facilities out of county … should have priority to come back," she said.

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Police Blotter

Robbery with Gun, Aggravated Assault with Gun: Stanyan Street and Parnassus Avenue, Sept. 4, 4:09 p.m.

Officers responded to a drug store parking lot following a report of a robbery with a gun.

When officers arrived, the suspects were gone from the scene.

Based on victim and witness statements, the victims parked their rental vehicle inside the drug store parking lot when three suspects wearing ski masks approached the first victim, pointed a gun at him, pistol whipped him, and took the victim's watch and wallet.

The suspects then approached the second victim, who was seated inside the passenger side of the vehicle, pointed a gun at her and took her purse. The suspects fled in a white Chrysler 300 (CA #7WLH816) on Stanyan Street.

The case was assigned to the robbery division.

Robbery, 24th Avenue and Quintara Street, Sept. 12, 9:50 a.m.

The victim told officers they noticed two suspects watching them when they boarded a bus.

The suspects then followed the victim off the bus and approached with a firearm pointed at the victim before grabbing the victim's necklace off their neck.

Both suspects then fled on foot.

Burglary: 1000 Block of Irving Street, Sept. 14, 3:52 a.m.

The Taraval Station Street Crime Unit observed two suspects inside a laundromat cutting open a change machine.

The officers detained the suspects, despite one suspect attempting to flee from the officers.

A search of the suspects' vehicle located a loaded firearm that had been stolen.

Both suspects were arrested.

Vandalism: 1800 Block of Irving Street, Sept. 15, 5:43 a.m.

Plain clothes officers on patrol observed the suspect pouring a cup of coffee onto a commercial building's wall before kicking the building's window until it shattered.

The suspect then walked away from the building but was later arrested.

Assault: 100 Block of West Portal Avenue, Sept. 27, 1:44 p.m.

Officers responded to a report of an assault.

The victim, a store owner, said the suspect was sitting on one of the store benches and was asked to leave.

The suspect responded angrily and punched the victim before pushing her against a parked car.

Three bystanders attempted to help the victim and were injured in the process.

Responding officers detained and arrested the suspect.

Burglary: 3900 Block of Noriega Street, Sept. 27, 4:56 a.m.

The victim reported their security camera had alerted them to a burglary and observed two suspects inside the place of business stealing two safes with a trackable tablet inside one of the safes.

Responding officers tracked the tablet to the Bayview District and located the two suspects with the safes in their possession.

After further investigation, the two suspects were arrested.

The Stonestown shopping center on 19th Avenue, next to San Francisco State University, has had many design changes since opening in 1952. The complex may undergo a dramatic transformation if current plans come to fruition. ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

Stonestown

Continued from page 1

There is no word yet on whether or not Round One Entertainment will be providing its own security force or not.

This latest venture might augment a much larger project by the landlords, Brookfield Properties, which proposes the development of about 2,930 new homes, including rental, for-sale, market rate and "affordable" options.

This plan includes: about 160,000 square feet for retail, mostly along 20th Avenue; 200,000 square feet of office space catering to small neighborhood businesses like architecture studios or accounting firms; and 40,000 square feet of "public community space" with at least one child-care facility.

While buildings are planned at between three and 18 stories tall, the project also includes about six acres of publicly accessible parks, plazas and open space.

Space for cars on surface parking lots will be eliminated but underground retail parking will continue and be expanded west, adding retail parking adjacent to Trader Joe's, Target, Regal Cinemas and Whole Foods.

The roots of the Stonestown Galleria go back about a century, when the new M-Ocean View streetcar line brought development into that section of the City.

Ellis and Henry Stoneson developed more than 25,000 homes in the western part of San Francisco, according to Brookfield Properties, with the original vision of creating a community serving the residents' daily needs and recreation without having to travel to other parts of the City.

It was to be a "city within a city."

After breaking ground in 1949, they built 700 apartments on 65 acres of land adjacent to it on 19th Avenue.

The shopping center was designed as an open air pedestrian promenade anchored by the Emporium department store at the north end. It also included a grocery store and medical complex, along with numerous retail shops and services.

At the time of completion in 1952, Stonestown was the nation's fourth-largest apartment and shopping center development.

A movie theater opened in the 1970s. A "major remodel" to modernize the mall was done in the 1980s with a second level of retail shops, plus a glass enclosure was added and a department store on the south side was renovated to connect with the main complex.

It was then rebranded as the Stonestown Galleria.

The Preliminary Project Assessment document for the new development says the area in front of the main Stonestown Galleria entry will be transformed into "The Commons," one of the main public plazas and a "civic space for the neighborhood," featuring a mix of retail and neighborhood-serving spaces while conveniently connected to public transit.

"The project proposes to enhance the west side of the site such that there is no longer a front or back side to Stonestown Galleria. A Town Square will become a neighborhood gathering place for shoppers and residents, with ample outdoor space for outdoor café seating, recreation space and events like a weekly farmer's market.

"The eastern residential edge will be centered around the new 20th Avenue retail corridor, featuring a mix of restaurants, retail and community uses. In contrast to the active retail-centric heart that is 20th Avenue, the west side is suited for more neighborhood-focused programs paired with more greenery, inspired by the natural landscape of the area," according to the assessment.

The San Francisco Business Times, however, reports there might be a dark cloud on the horizon with the potential to rain on this natural landscape.

On Aug. 14, staff reporter Alex Barreira posted that the mall "has about $180 million in maturing commercial mortgage-backed securities loans coming due in October. The two loans provided to mall owner Brookfield Properties by Morgan Stanley in 2013 have been flagged as a "maturity risk" in recent CMBS reports and placed on a debt industry watchlist for troubled loans.

Meanwhile, the real estate news website The Real Deal reported that in June, Brookfield and Paris-based Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield announced they would stop making payments on a $558 million loan tied to the Westfield San Francisco Centre in San Francisco, and surrender the nine-story mall to its lender.

A spokesperson for Brookfield Properties, Lindsay Kahn, would not comment on that situation, but did say that it has nothing to do with the proposal to develop the Round One Entertainment venue.

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Sunset District Artist Jeremiah Daly Inspires Awe Through His Abstract Work

By Kate Quach

In a Sunset District neighborhood on New Year's Eve, one house's lights are still left on. Inside, Jeremiah Daly props up a blank canvas in the corner of his living room before the clock strikes 12.

With the calendar flipped to the last month of 2018, he gathers fresh paints and brushes around him. He tries his hand at painting for the first time, freely swashing on layers of color spilling from his palette. Swirls, slashes and speckles rush forth onto the canvas.

The next day, after the paint dried, he awoke in awe to his painting's vibrancy and his artistic achievement. On that night before the New Year, Daly's living room only held one of his pieces. Now, his home overflows with them.

From Aug. 26 to Sept. 17, Daly's collection brought vivid color to his exhibition at the United Irish Cultural Center. In the St. Francis Room, Daly's works – numbering more than 180 – fully covered the walls of the space while bursting with captivating depth and variety. On the floor, Daly's abstract art pieces become structured into raised, five-foot-tall towers that drew in viewers to stroll around the four sides of the installation. Visitors immersed themselves further into the experience as they stopped to study each dot and splatter strewn throughout into his work.

For Daly, every step of his artistic process and finished product exceeds his expectations.

"Because I have no experience of art or anything to do with art, everything is a surprise," he said as he reexamined bits of blue paint dashed across a burnt-orange-colored base layer. He often exchanges traditional brushstroke techniques for the dynamic patterns made with credit cards and builds thick texture with his acrylic paint.

A self-proclaimed "hippie," his art flourishes in striking color and ranges from drippy, abstract renditions of the Golden Gate Bridge to an array of precisely painted symbols representing his life. As Daly delved deeper into his gravitation towards art, he hoped viewers would seek personal exploration within his pieces.

"Recently, I have a lot of hidden stuff in paintings and it's up to people to find," he said. "The whole idea is that once somebody discovers something in the painting, they start looking at things in greater detail. It's a case of self-discovery."

In a portrait canvas titled Waldo, drizzled black and white acrylic paint string throughout one another to form a tangled yet stark image. Tucked in between the mingling stripes of the painting scatter several red dots waiting for an observer's careful eye. Daly, watching as people point and count the masked dots, calls his interactive artworks including Waldo and the act of searching for hidden aspects in his pieces as "eye candy."

"Once you get a little piece, you want more and then you just keep looking and looking," he explained. "I love the paintings you can always follow. You can almost fall in and work your way up through the paintings."

A self-taught artist, Sunset District resident Jeremiah Daly recently showed a large collection of his work at the United Irish Cultural Center. He is pictured in front of one of his works. *Photo by Kate Quach.*

Liam Reidy, president of the United Irish Cultural Center, engaged in a new type of discovery through art when he found out that Daly, his friend of 20 years, created paintings. As Daly found space in the construction industry and later the art world, Reidy noted that community members were similarly impressed to learn about his friend's capabilities.

"Some people were very pleasantly surprised to know (Daly) as a tradesman and working in construction, and then not knowing anything about his interest in art," Reidy said. "I just couldn't believe it myself when I saw it."

Reidy, who welcomed partnerships with local creatives and organizations, invited Daly to exhibit his works in the Cultural Center.

"It's just a new perspective for people and we're delighted to showcase his skills, talents and interests," said Reidy, recognizing Daly's contributions to the celebration of Irish arts.

Daly also developed a shared appreciation for art with his niece Avital Daly. Avital, who knew him as her "wacky Uncle Jerry," reflected back to her childhood and spotted ways in which her uncle's character overflowed into his artistic style.

"One of his priorities was making sure that we got to live in our childhood as long as we wanted. At the same time he also ensured that if we wanted to have a serious or meaningful conversation, he made himself available," she reminisced. "His dichotomous personality, devilish yet supportive, can be seen so clearly within his art. There are hundreds of paintings with a variety of playful, colorful, curious work that juxtaposes with his serious, more muted art in such a thought-provoking way."

Avital finds that Jeremiah's art reflects pieces of himself; turning to a painting titled Me, she unravels the abstract variety of colors interwoven into a complex harmony.

After he finishes a piece, Daly and Avital would stand at the face of the painting while describing to her the memories and emotions that emerged over the hours of its creation.

"His work is sort of psychedelic in that way; they grab your attention and hold on to it. What amazed me is how often something that seemed so nonpictorial could convey the same image," she mentioned of her uncle's art and being lost in reflection with him.

Later in the process, she and Daly would craft a title based on their visions and perceptions.

"Because Jerry is self-taught, there is no other art quite like his and it is an honor and a privilege to know his work so personally," she added.

Displaying features of his life in his exhibition, Jeremiah Daly always calls visitors to walk across the room and look at his art from different angles, just as he did on that New Year's Day.

"I have a head full of ideas," said Daly. "I go to work and I love to see the end result. It's satisfying, turning around and looking at what I've created."

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'Then and Now': Lower Great Highway at Vicente Street

Left: The Chickery restaurant on the Lower Great Highway at Vicente Street, late 1920s. *Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.* Right: The signs are gone, no longer offering "The Finest Dinner on Earth" for $1. The larger windows on the right front of the building have been reduced by a brick wall to two smaller windows. Recently, an apartment for rent sign was in the window. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

Tunnel Records

Continued from page 1

each night, pairing movies and music. Opening night will have a country theme with a record release from local musician Jacob Aranda as well as shows and performances by artist Sarah Bethe Nelson and Noelle and the Deserters. Saturday, Oct. 7, will feature a DJ set from the Sounds of Paradise followed by a showing of Dario Argento's "Phenomena," which will be preceded by a drag show performance.

Next, on Sunday, Oct. 8, the theater will have the Wizard of Oz being shown using Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon for sound effects. This classic combination, according to Bergeron, creates a "sublime, eerie pairing between the two," when done right. This will be followed by the last night's events on Oct. 10 with a performance from the Edelman Family Jazz Band, which will be playing Thelonious Monk tunes. The final event will be the showing of jazz movies "Monk" and "Monk in Europe."

Wintroub said his Taraval Street location (named for the pedestrian tunnel that used to be run underneath the Upper Great Highway from Taraval to the beach) is skewed more toward jazz, soul and international music. He said the new Richmond District location will feature local and independent musicians and bands.

"Adam has been a longtime customer of mine and I've always really liked him and wanted to work with him," Wintraub said. "After they took over the 4 Star, they were looking for creative ideas for the side space that was being used as an art gallery. It's a nice fit for us."

Bergeron said the theater will continue to have more live music events with the new collaboration.

"It will always be a movie theater first and foremost, but I think we will have more live music than we've had in the past," he predicted. In addition, rock documentaries and movies focused on music will be shown primarily at the 4 Star.

"We really want to lean into the rock and roll movie theater kind of vibe," he said.

Tunnel Records owner Ben Wintroub in front of his Taraval Street store in the Outer Sunset. *Courtesy photo.*

Through this new connection, Bergeron hopes the theater and Tunnel Records will grow together with each other's help.

"I'm hoping we are able to make each other even better by teaming up in this way," he said.

The 4 Star Theater is located at 2200 Clement St. Learn more at 4-star-movies.com. Tunnel Records will be accessible through a side door on 23rd Avenue, north of Clement Street. Learn more at tunnelrecordssf.com.

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Botanical Garden's Flower Piano Event Draws 65,000 Music Lovers to GG Park

By Clarisse Kim

For several days in late summer, a special magic returned to Golden Gate Park's Botanical Garden.

From Sept. 8 to 12, Flower Piano came back for its eighth annual appearance. Hosted by the Gardens of Golden Gate Park (GGGP) and organized by Sunset Piano, the event celebrated the diversity of music in all its forms.

During the festival, a dozen pianos are planted around the 55-acre garden. Each location balanced scheduled mini-concerts with open playtime, encouraging both professional players and attendees to play at each whimsical site. Concerts showcased a wide variety of genres, ages, and cultures; performers ranged from local bands to Grammy-winning artists to talented youth performers. This year, a record-breaking total of 65,000 people attended the celebration.

This tradition dates back to 2015, when Sunset Piano co-founders Mauro ffortissimo and Dean Mermell reached out to the Recreation and Park Department to coordinate a musical event. At the time, the duo was known for their ambitious "Sunset Piano" project: placing pianos along the California coast as an act of preserving music.

"Dean and I were looking for another beautiful place to host a similar event, so we met with the Recreation and Park Department," ffortissimo said.

"Rec. and Park referred us to the Botanical Garden, who were looking to celebrate the garden's 75th anniversary," Mermell said. "We did the event three months after the meeting. It was an exhilarating experience."

Every year since then, ffortissimo and Mermell have collaborated with GGGP to organize annual iterations of Flower Piano – a process that takes around six months to plan and execute. According to the duo, a lot has changed since its first celebration, from a more diversified musical program to the addition of a new piano lounge.

What hasn't changed throughout the years, however, is the significant impact the festival has on artists and attendees alike. This is partially due to the Botanical Garden's uniqueness as a performance hall.

"The Botanical Garden is by far the most beautiful venue you can possibly think of," Karina Deniké, swing-band vocalist of the Cottontails said. "The whole concept of putting pianos throughout the gardens is such a brilliant idea – there's nothing like it anywhere else."

More than 65,000 people attended this year's Flower Piano events in Golden Gate Park's Botanical Garden Sept. 8-12. A dozen pianos were set up around the garden for performers and passersby to play. *Photos by Clarisse Kim.*

According to Jamie Chan, the GGGP's director of Programs and Partnerships, the Botanical Garden is the biggest public garden in San Francisco. She states that walking through the garden is like traveling around the globe; each section represents a different part of the world. The change in plants and layouts make each part of the garden seem like an entirely different venue.

"From the New Zealand trees to the Moon Viewing Gardens, we're giving people a chance to really enjoy music in all kinds of natural settings," Chan said. "The event is magical because everyone can find their own musical experience."

In some cases, like with the youth performers from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM), this event allows artists to play in an open-air concert for the first time.

"Our students rarely have an opportunity to perform outdoors in such natural beauty," said Justin Sun, the associate dean and executive director for SFCM's pre-college program. "Giving them an opportunity to showcase their passion and talent with the public is truly empowering."

Performers have also noted that the Botanical Garden's atmosphere emphasizes their music in unconventional, yet beautiful, ways.

"There's something about the open air that makes the music sound better," Francisco Rosales, pianist of the Musica Cubana Quintet, said. "It's like you're playing in the biggest concert hall in the world."

The laid-back, natural setting of each mini-concert helped grow deeper connections between performers and their audiences.

"I love how all the audience members were able to relax on the grass while enjoying our music," Anju Goto, violinist of the Sixth Station Trio, said. "Our concert definitely felt more intimate than a traditional concert hall."

Finally, this magic holds true even for the casual piano-players; impromptu community performances remain a Flower Piano favorite to this day.

"Mothers have told us that their children were inspired to play after Flower Piano," ffortissimo said. "Giving people a stage to get outside and play is one of the most rewarding parts of the event."

Chan, ffortissimo and Mermell have big plans for upcoming Flower Pianos.

"At GGGP, we often talk about the power of awe," Chan said. "That's what Flower Piano is all about. Our goal is to encourage people to be awestruck by the beauty and joy of music."

"We want to create more environments that open people up to the idea of wonder," Mermell said. "Here's to year nine!"

To learn more about the Flower Piano event, go to sfbg.org/flowerpiano.To learn more about Sunset Piano, go to sunsetpiano.com.

Sixth Station Trio Plays Ghibli Tribute For Flower Piano Debut

On Sept. 8 and 10, local band Sixth Station Trio made its Flower Piano debut. With Katelyn Tan on the piano, Anju Goto on the violin and Federico Ramirez on the cello, the band played a tribute to Studio Ghibli: an hour-long collection of music from the whimsically animated Japanese films.

"In Ghibli films, there's a lot of beautiful landscapes," Ramirez said. "It felt very appropriate to be playing these gorgeous melodies from the movies with a breathtaking floral backdrop."

The trio's performance was also a nod to their roots – their first recital was a similar Ghibli showcase held at SF's Grace Cathedral.

"You could say Ghibli music united us – we're all superfans," Tan said. "We've held three other Ghibli concerts before Flower Piano."

Although the Sixth Station Trio only formed officially in 2022, the members have been close friends and bandmates since high school. As SF natives, they attended Ruth Asawa School of the Arts and were classmates at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

"It felt natural to finally come together as a group," Tan said.

The trio will be hosting a Halloween concert Oct. 21. The group hopes to perform more Ghibli music in 2024.To learn more about the Sixth Station, visit their Instagram: @sixthstationtrio.

– Clarisse Kim

The Sixth Station Trio: Anju Goto (left) Katelyn Tan (center) and Federico Ramirez (right). The chamber group played a selection of songs from the popular Studio Ghibli films.

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Sunset Night Market Huge Success

Thank you to everyone who attended the first-ever Sunset Night Market. More than 10,000 people showed up. Longtime residents said they've never seen that many people gathered on Irving Street or anywhere in the Sunset before.

What explains such a large crowd? Certainly, people wanted a night market experience. But I believe the overwhelming response was because we needed it.

We need to bring people together, make streets safer, and give small businesses a boost in San Francisco. This is what a night market does.

We need a space to create joy and a night market celebrates all the fun things in life – food, music and art.

We need to demonstrate San Francisco is not destined to the doom loop we see on the news. Even when 10,000 people gathered on Irving Street, there were no reported incidents during the night market.

The event opened with a rousing performance by the Lowell High School drum corps and an entertaining cooking demonstration by celebrity chef Martin Yan. For the next five hours, there were musical and dancing acts on three stages. There was literal dancing in the street with a DJ at the intersection of 21st Avenue and Irving.

A kids' zone featured a giant inflatable slide and games. There was something for all ages. Families with young kids could get an early dinner when the night market opened at 5 p.m. and teenagers could hang out enjoying boba tea and music until 10 p.m.

The mayor spoke and gave Chef Yan a proclamation. But my favorite speech was by my husband Lionel Hsu.

He was the inspiration for the night market. Lionel's family lives in Taipei, which has some of the world's most famous night markets. We attend those night markets every year. I always thought the Sunset deserves its own night market and now we do.

Here's what Lionel had to say:

"I immigrated from Taiwan to America many years ago, and people have been asking me why I love San Francisco so much. I said because it is such a unique place, so inclusive, that everyone can call it home! To me, home is a place with lights and food at night, and the night market is exactly like that – it feels like home! I hope you feel the same. So, please make yourself at home, and have a great time!"

By all accounts, everyone had a good time despite the immense crowd and long lines. We simply never could have anticipated 10,000 people showing up, even in our wildest dreams. Thank you to everyone who showed grace. There was a positive energy as folks marveled at a community gathering we've never seen in the Sunset before.

The first night market was a pilot. It was just the beginning. The goal is to learn from the pilot and then improve upon the idea. We hope to have monthly night markets next year that rotate to different areas of the Sunset.

We'll have a lot more food next time and expand the night market two or three more blocks. We will also offer more traditional snacks found at the night markets in Taipei. My husband wants to make sure we have his favorite item: stinky tofu!

Starting something new isn't easy. Here's one example: I asked a city department if they could streamline a permit process. They said "no" because a state law was in the way. So, I called up Assemblymember Matt Haney and said "we need to change state law!"

Thanks to Assemblymember Haney, future night markets will be easier to produce across the state.

We owe a big "thank you" to all the innovators who made our history-making night market a reality. Angie Petitt and Carol Lau from the Sunset Mercantile curated the entire event. Their colleague Kevin North booked all the musical acts. Avenue Greenlight and the San Francisco Parks Alliance helped get it funded.

Thank you to all the vendors and brick-and-mortar storefronts who pioneered something new. Many reported their businesses had one of the busiest nights on record. I'm so proud to partner with everyone who believes in the vision.

Thank you to the 10,000 people who showed up to support joy.

This is how we will create our best San Francisco.

Joel Engardio is the District 4 representative on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He can be reached at engardiostaff@sfgov.org.

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News Analysis

Linda Badger

Homeless Encampment Removals

Homeless encampments represent a public failure – a manifestation of the desperation of those living on the streets and a threat to the health, safety and livelihoods of our neighborhoods.

To address this problem, San Francisco maintains free shelters and enforces laws and ordinances against "urban camping." Unlike many cities, San Francisco does not have an outright ban on people sleeping or lying on sidewalks. For example, San Francisco Police Code Section 168 states that, "during the hours between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., it is unlawful to sit or lie down upon a public sidewalk, or any object placed upon a public sidewalk."

Laws against tents or lodgings are more stringent. Police Code Section 169 state: "In the City and County of San Francisco, it is unlawful to place an encampment upon a public sidewalk." Prior to removing any encampment, however, this provision requires that the City give encampment dwellers 24-hour advance notice, store their personal property for later retrieval, and most importantly, offer available shelter to all inhabitants of the encampment being removed. To follow this policy, City officials must find an available bed in a shelter to offer to individuals before removing their encampments. If the individual refuses shelter, the encampment can be removed.

Despite these laws and ordinances, homeless encampments persist. Homeless advocates blame the City's severe shortfall in shelter beds. Lately politicians, including Mayor London Breed and Gov. Gavin Newsom, have been blaming the courts. In the Ninth Circuit, courts have found cities liable for violating the Constitution's Eighth Amendment ban on "cruel and unusual punishment" by criminalizing homeless encampments when their inhabitants have nowhere else to go. The legal issue of whether the Eighth Amendment can be used for this purpose is likely to go before the United States Supreme Court soon. In the meantime, local politicians continue to point fingers at a "sweeping" District Court Preliminary Injunction inhibiting encampment removals in San Francisco since 2022.

This controversial injunction resulted from a lawsuit brought in District Court by the Coalition on Homelessness and the ACLU on behalf of seven homeless individuals who alleged the City violated their Constitutional rights by removing their encampments without first offering them an available shelter bed, as required by San Francisco's own policies. The Magistrate judge noted that had San Francisco followed its own policies, it would not have run afoul of the Constitution. Because the Magistrate judge believed that homeless advocates had presented compelling evidence of illegal removals by the City, and that the City had presently only "thin" evidence that it made prior offers of shelter, she entered a preliminary injunction to prevent future violations when enforcing five "sit, lie or sleep" laws and ordinances, pending a full trial on the merits in 2024.

The wording of the preliminary injunction enjoins the City from enforcing or threatening to enforce five laws or ordinances that "prohibit involuntarily homeless individuals from sitting, lying or sleeping on public property," including San Francisco Police Codes 168 and 169. The Court quotes Ninth Circuit precedent holding that individuals given access to "adequate temporary shelter," would not be considered "involuntarily homeless," and even notes that San Francisco's written policy of offering shelter before removing an encampment is constitutional.

In this context, the preliminary injunction appears to require San Francisco to do little more than follow its existing written policy of offering a homeless individual an available shelter before removing his/her encampment. If that individual rejects the offer, they would not be "involuntarily homeless," and the injunction would not apply.

Paradoxically, the City claimed that the injunction prohibits San Francisco from removing any encampments unless and until it can provide enough shelter beds for all of its thousands of homeless inhabitants. According to the San Francisco city attorney: "[T]he district court's ruling, requiring that San Francisco provide housing for every person experiencing homelessness before it can enforce many of its most important laws as to particular encampments, places San Francisco in an impossible situation."

With a homeless population of more than 7,000 and shelter beds for approximately 3,000, San Francisco's interpretation of the preliminary injunction means that its encampment laws would not be enforceable in the foreseeable future. Because of the injunction, San Francisco Police were informed in a department notice that they could "NOT use, enforce, or threaten to enforce the [five laws and ordinances] to prohibit homeless individuals from sitting, lying or sleeping on public property."

San Francisco's draconian interpretation made the national news and angered many residents. The city attorney asked the Magistrate judge to clarify the injunction, but she rejected the request on procedural grounds, inviting a proper motion. Instead, the City appealed the issue to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. On Aug. 23, while Breed conducted a rally against the "crippling" injunction outside of the courthouse, the City asked the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to, among other things, vacate or modify the injunction.

During the argument before the Court of Appeals, the judges as well as attorneys for the plaintiffs appeared perplexed by the City's argued interpretation, which one judge said seemed "manufactured." Ultimately, the Court of Appeals declined to modify the injunction because, "the parties agree that a person is not involuntarily homeless if they have declined a specific offer of available shelter or otherwise have access to such shelter or the means to obtain it." In other words, San Francisco can enforce its sit, lie, sleep and encampment rules as long as it offers an available shelter bed to the individual whose encampment is being removed, which was basically SFPD's pre-injunction written policy.

Next year, assuming there is no settlement of the matter, the District Court will hold a trial to determine if San Francisco violated the Constitutional rights of seven homeless plaintiffs whose encampments were removed, allegedly without an offer of shelter. The more impactful issue to be addressed by the courts (and likely the U.S. Supreme Court), however, is whether removing an encampment without an offer of shelter constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment" in cities like San Francisco, which do not have outright bans on sleeping or lying in public. The City of San Francisco is arguing that it is under no constitutional obligation to make an offer of shelter before removing encampments because there are miles of other public spaces where homeless individuals can legally sleep on a sidewalk or in a park, 20 out of 24 hours of the day.

After spending millions of dollars to address San Francisco's homeless problem, the legal resolution sought seems to be the age-old solution of having the police roust desperate people sleeping on the streets to tell them to "move along." This will certainly help politicians intent on cleaning up the City before big events, such as the recently held Dreamforce conference or the upcoming Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit scheduled for Nov. 12-18, but it does nothing for the poor, the mentally ill, or the addicted who need economic and medical help.

Linda Badger is a Richmond District resident, lawyer and writer who contributes to the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers.

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Roy Tahtinen's 'HearSFound' Photographs Are Love Letters to San Francisco

By Judith Kahn

Roy Tahtinen conceived of his current photographic series on Valentine's Day in 2016, when he made "an unintentional pivot" while collecting stones at Ocean Beach.

Instead of pocketing them, he began photographing the heart-shaped stones where they lay, posting one new heart image each day on social media. Since then, he continues to post one photo every day from some corner of the City.

He has always noticed images in objects around him that were not placed there intentionally. For example, he might see a face in a tree, an animal in a cloud, a number in a leaf, or many other shapes that appear in nature or in manufactured objects. Many people have experienced this phenomenon to some degree.

On that Valentine's Day, he realized that through photographing these objects in their immediate context, they could be shared more widely. In his ongoing exploration, Tahtinen realized the objects took on added meaning when photographed where they were found. Now, as the photographs become social media posts, many more people around the world can see what Tahtinen sees and form their own impressions.

On a practical level, this also freed him from the habit of collecting found objects and unloading them into the drawers and shelves of his small Sunset District flat.

"I decided I needed to stop this practice when I ran out of places to keep them," Tahtinen said.

"The concept of focusing on hearts specifically was inspired by Tony Bennet's song 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco' as well as my personal love for this amazing City," he explained. "So, in exploring how to combine my unique way of seeing things – San Francisco's connection with hearts, and my love of the City – I decided, 'If you left your heart in San Francisco, I am going to try to find it.'"

In 2018, he challenged himself to post a photograph of one new heart to Instagram every day.

"This is when I started the series, HeartSFound," he said. "And this is where things started to get meaningful."

Tahtinen admits that while he has produced other photographic series, the term "series" might be an understatement with the hearts, which he's been posting daily for five years.

Tahtinen selects a photograph each morning and pairs it with a quotation that either reflects the image or contrasts with it in a surprising way.

"Personally, it has been a form of meditation, a method to develop as an artist and an amazing way to connect with people from all over the world," he said.

Originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, Tahtinen worked in advertising and was looking for creative opportunities before moving here in 2000. He is not a full-time photographer.

"I think any fine arts pursuit is difficult to do full time if you want to pay the bills," he said.

He said he feels lucky to have found a career that fosters and encourages creativity.

"The (advertising) work that was coming out of San Francisco was so original," he said.

It was the dot-com boom, with lots of money and creativity behind many thriving brands, such as Levi's, SF Giants and Williams-Sonoma. In 2022, he started working with the brand design team at Peet's Coffee, his current position.

Tahtinen is curating his favorite heart images to create a book. He is working through how to compose it, which quotations to use to support the images, and how to produce it.

"I started making various collections and playing around with how photos work together and I am letting that drive the development."

Tahtinen finds the greatest return on his creativity is "showing other people my perspective of the world and having them appreciate the way I see it. This is validating and rewarding because it is so personal." He adds, "I am well aware that many parts of our lives seem designed to discourage creativity. So, the first reward of being artists or creatives is the freedom to be ourselves and not fight for permission."

His other interests are traveling and walking, the latter a daily activity for him. The beauty, diversity and walkability of SF inspire him to "walk more, to explore the City and to slow down and see more of what is around me."

He describes his hometown of Grand Rapids as "actually a really fantastic place. I intended on moving back after a year or two, but I fell in love with the City and have made San Francisco my home."

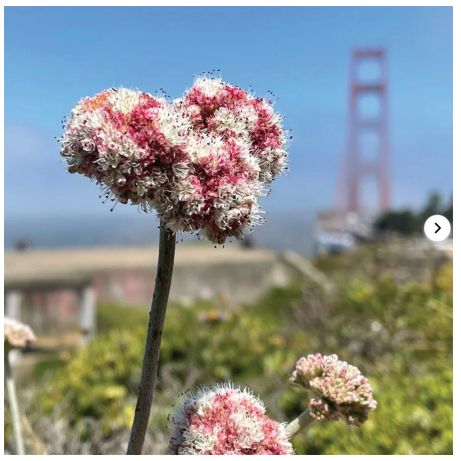
Roy Tahtinen has a knack for seeing hearts wherever he goes. He pairs his heart photos with quotations as "a form of meditation, a method to develop as an artist and an amazing way to connect with people from all over the world." ***Courtesy photo.***

Tahtinen posts daily to Instagram and Facebook – @HeartSFound.art and HeartSFound.art, respectively – and Next Door, under Roy Tahtinen, offering a positive, bright spot on the often contentious social media platform. His largest current physical installation is showing in the Sunset District at Hunt & Gather, located at 1108 Irving St. There, you can find framed prints along with bookmarks and greeting cards. Tahtinen's cards and prints are also found in little shops around San Francisco, but he hopes to find wider distribution.

Tahtinen said his book will be a love note to San Francisco.

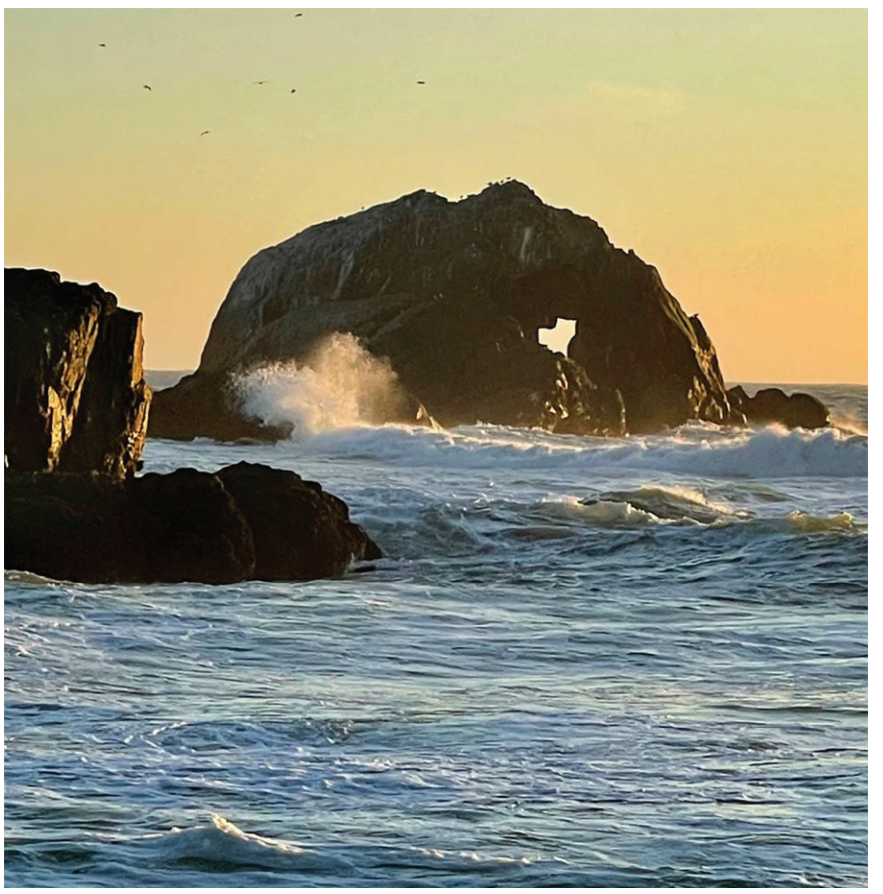
"I am inspired by those who left their hearts here," he said. "There are so many shapes a heart can come in. It can be broken or whole. Wet or dry. Positive or negative. Symmetrical or eclectic. All beautiful in their own way. So, the book is also a celebration of diversity and inclusion. We are all so different, yet at the same time, we are all the same."

See his work at heartsfound.art.



Left: Seaside Buckwheat at Golden Gate Bridge by Roy Tahtinen.

Below: Two of Roy Tahtinen's photos showing heart-shaped holes he observed in wood and rock carved by natural forces. See a large collection of his work at the Hunt & Gather art gallery at 1108 Irving St. and on his website, heartSFound.art.



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Every Friday in October
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